

>My name is Patrik Sjöberg and I'm a Phd-student at the Stockholm University  
>in Sweden. My work concerns different aspects of found footage films, or  
>compilation films. If there is anyone who's interested in these type of  
>films or have any information about films or filmmakers that make these  
>compilation films, please get in touch with me.

Peggy Ahwesh has a strange new found footage film called "The Color of Love." It's comprised of a porno movie of two women having sex over the naked corpse of a dead man whom they have presumedly just murdered. The footage, when Peggy found it, was quite deteriorated, and she preserved and enhanced the deterioration by step printing sections of it. Various kinds of colorful bacterial degradation blossom across the surface of the film, alternately obscuring or exacerbating the depravity of the imagery behind it. The soundtrack is some kind of Romanian/romantic/dance/violin music (sorry, don't know the actual source) which lends a tone of romantic irony to the whole proceeding. There's a sense of atrophied feminist empowerment to the film which is both disturbing and engaging.

--

Scott Stark

sstark@sirius.com

> the same time, Ken Jacobs reexamination of a Biograph one-reeler,  
"Tom, Tom, the > Piper's Son (1969).

Jacobs' "Perfect Film" is even better, i think. This is a reel of film about 15-20 minutes long that he says he found in the trash. It's a partially sync'ed news footage which is full of sound and picture elisions, apparently a reel intended to accompany and illustrate a nightly news report of the event: the same story told several ways about the assassination of Malcolm X. Jacobs says he did little or nothing to this film, except rescue it out of the garbage someplace. If this is true it is indeed the 'perfect' found footage film.

There are zillions of found-footage films, but this one is quite special.

konrad

> >I particularly like the work of French filmmaker, Cecile Fontaine. Her  
> >"Cruises" (1989), for example, mixes old home movies with footage from a  
> >promotional film from a cruise ship company. Fontaine's manipulations of the  
> >film surface do strange and wonderful things to the messages coming from the  
> >original footage.

> >

> >Scott Hammen

>

> Do you know what her process is? I saw a film of hers recently that was  
> quite beautiful. I'd be interested in knowing how it was done.  
>  
> Scott Stark

Where did you see her films? I never heard of her but what you describe sounds interesting. I'm in San Francisco. Is there a sort of film library where I can see her films?

S. Ariya

My mention of Cecile Fontaine in the context of favorite found footage films brought the above two questions. I'll answer the easy one first.

Her films are distributed by the cooperative LIGHT CONE in Paris; I don't know if she has work in distribution in the US but our beloved list-founder Pip Chodorov probably knows (as he is one of the beams of LIGHT CONE) and may give us the answer soon.

I can't answer Scott Stark's question either. But my thinking about why I can't has got mixed with his earlier even bigger question: "Why are you all making or watching or talking or reading about this kind of work?"

I've seen Cecile Fontaine frequently at screenings of her films and I've never asked her how she does what she does even though doing so would clearly be an expression of admiration. And admiration I DO want to express.

Sometimes for me there's more magic in the watching if I DON'T know how things were done. I love watching Brakhage's recent hand-painted films, for example. But is this "honest" enjoyment if I don't want to know about the probably painful physical effort that must go into making them?

The relation between the very private act of making or watching and the very public one of talking (including the kind of "talking" we do in this list) or showing your film to an audience is complicated. Are private pleasures diminished or intensified by being made public?

-Scott Hammen

Rather than recommending a long list of found footage films (from Conner to Baldwin etc.), I wanted to mention several publications/contacts:

The Austrian film magazine BLIMP (it's bi-lingual in German & English) came out with a special found footage issue in 1991 (spring issue, #16) which includes articles on Bruce Conner, Cecile Fontaine, Dietmar Brehm and others along with essays by Sharon Sandusky, Yann Beauvais and Peter Tscherkassky. BLIMP's address: Griesplatz 36, A-8020 Graz, Austria. Phone:

0316/91 67 63; fax: 0316/91 85 46.

That specific issue of BLIMP was published in conjunction with a big Found Footage Film Festival that was organized by Sixpack Film in Vienna in 1991 ( I curated a few programs with American found footage films for them). You might be interested in the separate festival brochure as well (#198), which has the exact program and extensive program notes in it. You might be able to get it directly from Sixpack Film. Address: Sixpack Film, attn.: Brigitta Burger-Utzer, Neubaugasse 36, A-1071 Vienna, Austria. Phone: 1/526-0990; fax: 1/526-0992. If you would like an English translation of my part of the program notes (which I have on disk somewhere), you can e-mail me directly at: panacea@tezcat.com

The Swiss experimental film festival VIPER in Lucerne also had found footage films as its main programmatic focus in 1992 or 1993.

Bill Wees organized an extensive series of found footage films at Anthology Film Archives about two years ago or so -- a catalog was published in conjunction with this series, which I believe is entitled "Recycled Images." You can probably get it by contacting Robert Haller at Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, New York, NY, 10003. Phone: 212/505-5181; fax: 212/477-2714.

Hope this helps...

Ines Sommer

Date: Wed, 27 Dec 1995 22:27:02 -0500  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: Pip Chodorov <PipChod@AOL.COM>  
Subject: Re: Cecile Fontaine  
To: Multiple recipients of list FRAMEWORKS  
<FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

WARNING: HIGHLY EXPLICIT INFORMATION FOLLOWS

READ NO FURTHER IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO KNOW HOW CECILE FONTAINE MAKES MOVIES.

Cecile Fontaine is one of the most modest people I know; she is happy to talk about her work, but does not consider her methods exceptionally interesting. In fact each film represents a different process of working with found footage and chemicals, but as she makes no notes she has a hard time remembering what she did on any given film, or repeating the exercise.

She works on her kitchen table, which until she moved recently was the largest available space in a tiny maid's room style apartment.

Friends give her film all the time. The content, then, ranges from documentaries on golf, to travel cruise advertisements, to home movies, to Japanese Buto dancers. Last year we found a huge dumpster full of old film in Paris' Jardin des Plantes, next to the natural science museum. The museum had junked their film archives, so this year we have seen a rash of animal found footage films, including Cecile's "La Peche Miraculeuse" which was shown around America in October, presented by Yann Beauvais.

Then she works with the footage in a number of ways: chemical alteration, using simple household cleansing products, salts, etc, and hand manipulation such as editing, or layering different emulsions together. "La Peche Miraculeuse" involves all these techniques; some of the images are splotchy from chemical attack; super-8 film strips zig-zag across the screen Len Lye style (she cut 8mm wide strips away the 16mm emulsion to make room for the 8mm emulsion, which she simply scotch taped to the base); monochrome blue fish and monochrome red people are superimposed (she does this by treating the film with bleach, applying scotch tape to the emulsion side of a length of film, and then peeling the different colored layers off one by one on the scotch tape, and then laying these layers down on top of other layers or onto a clear base).

She exasperates film labs as her originals are about 3mm thick with layers of tape, and she never makes internegatives. Also she asks them to keep the sound track as is, whatever it may sound like (she will not have actually heard it yet), as different optical tracks converge in the approximate place where the sound reader is. This requires them to make a reversal print of the entire width of film, including the sound track, which they claim they can't do, but invariably succeed. It must be noted that her films are very beautiful to look at by hand as well.

She scratches her titles into the emulsion, and she even playfully modifies the academic leader, confounding projectionists who don't know when to throw the image. You could say she works with her hands and does anything you can do to a film in your kitchen without ever using a camera (nor a dark room). And in this sense she truly does "experiment", never quite knowing what the results will be.

I would also say that although there is a definite expression going on in her films, such as ridiculing people's stilted behavior when they are in front of a camera, her technique and her attitude towards her filmmaking belie a certain naivete, to the point where one wonders how much of the "meaning" is due to her choices, and how much to chance -- that she had received a certain

kind of image to work with, and that she manipulated it in a way that happened to work. But she has been working now for such a long time, and her last four or five films show a certain mastery of technique, but also of expression, which makes me think her ignorance of lab processes and her modest way of describing her work are mere character traits -- her films are sensitive, intelligent, beautiful, rhythmic and far from naive.

-Pip Chodorov <PipChod@aol.com>











